Africa RISING Ethiopian Highlands Project Site Selection for Amhara Region (19-21 December 2012)

**Itinerary:**

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| **Date** | **Time** | **Activities** |
| 19/12/’12 | * 10:00-12:00 pm * 12:00-1:00 pm * 2:00-4:00pm * 4:00-5:30 pm | * Gerba Leta (ILRI) and Dr Seid Ahmed (Representing Dr. Geletu Bejiga ICARDA-Ethiopia country Manager) travelled from Addis Ababa to North Showa Zone, Debre Berhan * Visit to D/Berhan Agricultural Research Center (DBARC) * Visit to zone/woreda office of agriculture * Visit to zone/woreda Administrative office |
| 20/12/’12 | * 9:00 -12:00 pm * 2:00-5:00 pm | * Visit to Gudo-Beret (sub-Kebele Mush) kebele * Visit to Goshe-Bado kebele |
| 21/12/’12 | * 8:30-11:30 am | * Visit to Kor Margefia kebele |

**Day I**

**Visit to Debre Berhan Agricultural Research Center Persons contacted:**

* Mr. Beneberu Tefera (Center Director)
* Mr. Temesgen Alene (Crop researcher-Legume Breeder)
* Dr. Aschalew Tsegahun (livestock researcher-Nutrition)

Introduction to Africa RISING project has been made by Gerba and Seid . After the briefing, discussion was made on the proposed sites. The center Director, Mr. Beneberu was pleased for the coming of ILRI/ICARDA to their region with the new project Africa RISING EH. He suggested another Wereda than **Basona-Werana** but through our discussions. He has agreed with the same. During our discussion the important selection criteria like distance from market, accessibility (all weather road), functional FTC, skilled personnel (DAs) were used to select the sites. The center satisfied by the proposed kebeles except the FTC which is not well equipped and operating in most parts Amhara region. Even then, he said that North Showa zone FTC operates better than the other zones in the region. He suggested strong assistance is anticipated from the upcoming project to capacitate the FTC so as to enable proper technology promotion/demonstration. On the livestock side, the Center Director suggested the importance of introducing feed technology with breed. In addition, the center’s acquisition of the Dorpper sheep breeds (there are cross breeds that can be taken to the farmers) from South Africa would create suitable situation for joint technology scaling out. In the end, the Director assigned Temesgen and Aschalew to join site selection team.

**Visit to Basona-Werana Woreda office of Agriculture**

**Person contacted:** Shewangizaw H/Michael (Deputy Head, Office of Agriculture).

The young and organized deputy head was happy to welcome the new project that support smallholder farmers development need on crop-livestock intensification. Unlike Oromia region, the livestock agency is not an autonomous entity but operating as a process under the umbrella of office of agriculture. As a result, we address both crop and livestock issues together. Like for other partners, we briefed him about the project and its present objectives. We requested necessary basic data and the outline of the candidate kebeles. Accordingly, he gave us an overview of the three candidate kebeles as presented below:

1. **Gudo-Beret Kebele**

* Located on the highway to Dessie, 32 km to the north of Debre Berhan
* The framing system is crop-livestock
* D/Berhan Agricultural Research has been doing lots of on-farm technology demonstration activities in Mush sub-Kebele
* Malt barley production/seed multiplication is underway in this kebele through contract growing scheme by the regional seed enterprise
* Wheat variety like Digalu and Bolo varieties are currently demonstrated in kebele
* DAs from different Disciplines (NRM, Livestock and Crop) are deployed
* Farmers learned to grow and feed fodder notably by mixing wild oat with highland vetch

1. **Goshe-Bado Kebele**

* Located 17 kms to the north west of Debre Berhan
* Have all weather road
* The farming system is mixed crop-livestock
* The woreda has been working on vertisols management technology expansion (draining vertisols and enable early planting) in the kebele
* The kebele has 1.5 ha of functional FTC serving for technology demonstration site but curtailed by resource shortage to operate in its full capacity
* Skilled number of DAs for different sectors ( livestock including health, crop and NRM)
* The highland part is renowned for wheat production
* Bee keeping initiative/practices on group and individual bases is there
* Ideal climate for highland fruit production (efforts are undertaking).

1. **Kore Margefia kebele**

* It is located 5-10 km on road to Addis from Debre Berhan
* Barley is the major crop followed by Fababean
* Very close to the zonal town/market
* Dairy is the popular production activity

Additionally the Deputy Head has suggested other potential sites for future expansion. Based on our request, he agreed and assigned Mr. Alemu, a Veteran Extension expert working in the office of agriculture to join us in the field visit and site selections.

**Visit to North Showa Zone office of Agriculture**

**Person Contacted:** Mr Awgichew Teshome (Head of North Showa Zone office of Agriculture)

Similar to other partners, we briefed Mr. Awgichew about the Africa RISING project, the objectives of our present mission and our aspiration for integrated intervention and formulation of partnership. Seid has also widely explained the role of ILRI/ICARDA under the project. He remarked the importance of the zonal office of agriculture engagement on project planning and collaboration throughout the projectperiod.

Awgichew indicated the telephone discussion he has made with ILRI and the right decision made on validating the appropriate intervention woreda. He said that the zone office of Agriculture main agenda is supporting smallholder farmers become food secured and improved their livelihood. He added “we are warmly welcome the coming of Africa RISING EH project to the Zone”. He also underpinned Zone Office of Agriculture readiness to collate different stakeholders at different level to make sure the project become effective and further scaled out. He revealed the strong willingness to collaborate with the new project. Finally, he shared the team his worries of participating on any envisaged occasion from 9th of January to 11th March 2013 as this period is the busiest time due to national campaign for SWC.

**Day II (20/12/12)**

**Visit to Gudo Beret Kebele**

**Visiting team:**

1. Dr. Aschalew Tsegahun (Livestock researcher, DBARC)
2. Temesgen Alene (Crop researcher, DBARC)
3. Alemu Beyene (Expert, woreda office of agriculture)
4. Dr. Seid Ahemed (ICARDA, Legume Pathologist)
5. Gerba Leta (SRA, ILRI)

**Basic data from DAs office:**

* Total area of the kebele is 5,540 ha among which only 1,085 ha is cultivated but largely covered by plantation forest (1,418 ha)
* Number of HH is 1,062 out of which 232 are women
* Major crops are barley, wheat, Faba bean, Field pea and lentil, in that order
* Irrigation is practiced by some farmers accessible to river diversion
* Both cross and local breeds cattle are kept by the farmers
* The number of small ruminant particularly sheep out ways all other livestock
* There are grazing and waste lands

**Team observations:**

* Undulated land feature with highland agro-ecology
* Low potential for crop production owning to the prevailing land feature that prone to erosion, land degradation, and stone outcrop
* Mixed crop-livestock system is commonly practiced
* Large food and seed potato production with good storage facility in Mush sub kebele
* Few livestock fattening practice (sheep and bullocks)
* Good livestock housing practice
* Tradition of cereal straw mixed with legume haulm and pulverized well to improve livestock feed intake and make nutritious
* Storing crop residue and hays for dry season feeding
* Semi-functional FTC with showcasing of rain water management activities through stone/soil bund making and micro basin development
* Improved on farm crop varieties seed multiplication and production efforts

**Local partners’ impressions:**

* Proactive farmers for technology adoption and popularization
* Ideal site for introduction of highland fruits
* Dairy production is largely practiced

**Visit to Goshe Bado kebele**

**Basic data from DAs office:**

* The kebele is divided in to highland, mid and lowland agro-ecology
* Number of HH is 1,854 (1,090 male and 764 female)
* Total land under cultivation is 1,680 ha
* Diverse crops: wheat, Fababean, chickpea, tef, barley, lentil, sorghum, field peas, grass pea, in that order
* Few irrigated land for vegetable, lentil, etc.
* Diversity of livestock population including cross breeds
* Apiculture initiatives (on individual and group bases)
* Strong fattening efforts (bullocks/oxen, sheep and goats)

**Team observations:**

* High potential area for crop production
* Less recent research engagement
* Productive FTC ideal for crop technology promotion
* Very good livestock housing, fattening, and feed storage activities by individual farmers
* Elite model farmer engaged in integrated backyard rainfed and irrigation development like vegetables, fruits, fodder, lumber/farm trees and beekeeping activities using water harvesting technology (useful for experience exchanging with farmers from other kebele)
* Skilled personnel (DAs) in all division (crop, livestock, NRM and livestock health technician)
* Very undulated land feature in the valley bottom (lowland) part of the kebele
* Crops like wheat, Faba bean, chickpea, lentil, grass pea and fenugreek (high vale spice) could be of interest for ICARDA’s strong engagement

**Local partners’ impression:**

* Farmers are willing to collaborate and engage themselves in technology promotion
* Community capacitated to uptake new practices through the support of ex-Red burner (already closed NGO) and the local NGO called Adino engaged in integrated rural development
* Diversity of crop-livestock system is an opportunity for project intervention and contrasting its outcome over site
* The site is in line with crop-livestock intensification objective

**Day III (21/12/2012)**

**Visit to Kor Margefia kebele**

The team traveled to Kor Margefia the third candidate kebele 30 minutes away from all-weather road.

**Basic information from DAs office:**

* The agro ecology is characterized by highland and few frost margin
* Total area of the land is 2,970 ha out of which 1,058 is under cultivation
* The majority is the grazing land
* Barley is the major crop followed by wheat and faba bean
* Irrigation is also practiced in some part of the kebele
* Livestock particularly dairy production is largely practiced
* Number of cross breed cows are virtually equal to the local ones
* Sheep population surpass all other livestock

**Team observations:**

* There is FTC but not yet operating
* Dairy /livestock is the major activity for the resident
* Adequate skilled personnel is there
* Low productive potential for crops
* Some parts of the kebele is marshy during the rainy season for accessibility
* Very close to the zonal town/market
* There is fattening initiative by individual farmer

**Local partners’ impression:**

* Access is obstructed during the rainy season
* Crop is largely vulnerable to natural calamities (hail storm and frost)
* Farmers resistant to weed crop in anticipating of more biomass production from crop field for their animals
* Not much ideal for integrated crop-livestock intensification
* Commendable to involve DAs from the kebele in the forthcoming training-workshop to upgrade their capacity and enhance them to tryout by themselves knowledge/skill obtained in the training process.

**Final Decision and Justification of the Visiting Team:**

* The two kebeles, Gudo Beret and Goshe Bado are the most suitable ones for Africa RISING project intervention for the woreda based on key selection criteria used
* The resident farmers are proactive for technology adoption and promotion
* Both sites are in line with the interest of zonal/woreda development partners
* Diversity of crop-livestock system, accessibility, contrasting distance from the market and existing promising initiatives are encouraging for decision making; DBARC has research activities in the two kebeles.

**Following actions:**

* To update/invite respective stakeholders/partners for the upcoming national workshop
* Each team agreed to update back the decision we have made to their office

**Possible uncertainties:**

* Zonal/woreda agriculture offices envisaged less likelihood of participating in any workshop from 9th of January to 10th of March 2013 because of national SWC campaign
* Debre-Berhan Agriculture Research Center is also anticipated the regional research review period around 2nd to 3rd weeks of January

**Opportunities:**

* Possible to include some researchable projects in the regional research review
* The information helps to cautiously plan the zonal/national planning workshop
* There are some local NGOs operating in the wereda and also an investor nearby where he grows temperate fruits and Dorpper sheep
* USAID-wheat project is being implemented in rear by Wereda and there will be synergy

**Remarks:**

* Despite the frequent attempt we have made to visit the zonal and woreda administration offices, we were not successful because of intensive meeting.

Gerba and Seid